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Farmer Jones and His City Partner

—OR—

The Goose that Laid the Golden Egg

"When a man has learned to walk and has trusted his legs for a couple of score years, it is no time for him to be experimentin' with fancy crutches or flying machines."

After Farmer Jones delivered the above observation he looked hard at the thin man who was sitting as inoffensively as he could on an empty nail keg. The thin man carved up a couple of shingles with his pocket knife and remained silent.

The Hard Days.

"When I started on this place," continued Jones, waving his arm vaguely towards several hundred acres of well tilled land, "I needed a thousand dollars to be worth nothin'. There was no town over yonder, or no railroad through it. No telegraph or telephones, or automobiles, or binders or hay loaders."

The thin man opened his mouth and went through the process of laughing without making any articulate sound.

"There wasn't anything human in the country except a few half-starved pioneers lyin' awake at night listenin' to the wolves," went on the big farmer. "But what's the use of talkin' to the present generation? We know what farmin' was. Woods! swamps! fires! floods and shakin' ague!"

"It was durned tough," said the man on the keg.

"But we came through it," replied Farmer Jones, "and it put the iron into us. But it took grit.

"Do you remember when we used to log clearin's, gatherin' up armfuls of burned brands till we were blacker than the ace of spades, settin' fire to the heaps, and scrapin' up potash for the English market. Skippin' the pioneer days, do you remember the seventies?"

"I had a horse die every Christmas regular for ten years," replied the thin man, pulling his pale whiskers. "I'll never forget the decade from 1870 to 1880, when I had a mortgage on my back like a fly blister."

A Contrast in Prices.

"The other day," said Farmer Jones, "I looked over an old newspaper containin' the Toronto markets for July, 1880. What did I see? Butter, 15 cents a pound; eggs, 12 cents a dozen; dressed hogs, \$6.50 to \$7.00 per hundred; chickens, per pair, 30 to 40 cents; hay, \$7.00 to \$13.00 a ton; straw, \$4.50 to \$6.00 a ton."

"Queer difference now," soliloquized the man on the keg.

"Ain't there?" exclaimed Jones, picking up a Toronto paper. "Listen, butter, 25 cents a pound; eggs, 25 cents a dozen; dressed hogs, \$9.75 to \$10.25 per hundred; chickens, dressed, 16 to 18 cents per pound, spring, 30 to 35 cents; hay, \$16.00 to \$20.00 per ton; straw, \$6.00 to \$8.00 per ton loose, \$13.00 to \$14.00 per ton bundled."

"Jee-rusalem," said the thin man, "It makes me sick to think of the good old times."

"I see they're paying from 12 to 14 cents a box for raspberries, from 16 to 17 cents a box for thimble-berries; \$1.00 to \$1.25 for tomatoes and cucumbers, and \$6.00 a barrel for new potatoes," read Jones. "Do you remember when raspberries and thimble-berries grew so thick in the woods that the people in the villages could go out and pick all they wanted for nothing. Now the woods are gone, the villages are cities, and the berry-pickers are working all day in factories and paying us to grow their berries and vegetables for them."

"It's odd," said the other, "Plumb odd."

Reasons for Prosperity.

"There's reasons for it," replied Farmer Jones, "Many reasons. More people, more arms to work, more mouths to feed, growth of factories, development of trade, but there is one big reason—tariff."

"I don't know what to think about that crittur," said the thin man. "Some yell things about him in my left ear and others yell different things in my right."

Tariff Philosophy.

"Stop your ears and use your brains," advised Jones. "Those old prices paid for our goods were the prices of the period before

the National Policy, which all governments, Grit and Tory, have been wise enough to continue. Here's my position. I judge the tariff by its results. I'm not workin' as hard to-day as I was thirty years ago. I couldn't, I'm not as economical. I couldn't be. Yet, thirty years ago I was scratchin' like a hen on a hot griddle to get three slim meals a day and a hard bed at night, and to pay the interest on a mortgage. Now I work about eight hours a day, own my land, have money in the bank, eat the best food, wear as good clothes as town people, go to the city when I like, and take an annual vacation just like preachers. I've a piano, and a spare driver. Two of my sons are at college and my eldest daughter is studying music in one of the city conservatories. What's made the difference? Markets. In the old days we had none. Most of the people in the country were farmers, and we did not want one anothers' stuff. Britain was too far away when we had no fast liners and cold storage, and the United States shut their door in our faces. We had to sink or swim, and we splashed a bit, but we floated. When we got a tariff our towns and cities began to boom. Factories attracted laborers who had to have food and clothing. They had no time to grow their own vegetables or go to the woods to pick berries. In the old days we labored like Turks to grow stuff which spoiled on our hands. To-day we can't raise enough. The cities and towns of Canada are cryin' for our goods. The British Isles are roarin' for our fruit, meat and dairy produce. Prices are being paid that would have lifted the hair off my old father's head."

A Debatable Question.

"Some say that the tariff has worked against us as well as for us," objected the man on the keg. "Hasn't it increased the cost of farm implements, clothing, furniture and other things we use?"

"That's a debatable question," replied Farmer Jones. "Don't you get your binder and other machinery cheaper than you did twenty years ago, and get a better thing, too? Same with your buggy and wagon. But supposin' it has, in some things," conceded Jones, "a man must not expect everything. Some of the farmers around here want the whole government of Canada to be run for their benefit. If the city people are hurt by tariff charges, we're hurt too. Anything that checks their growth hurts our market. Wipe out the great manufacturing centres and where are we? Back to the good old days when our eggs sold at 12 cents a dozen. I suppose we might have a tariff fixed in Canada that would be entirely in favor of us farmers and would skin the city

and town people out of their eye teeth. That looks to me like living high on the goose that laid the golden eggs. In a short time we'd have neither eggs nor goose."

"Nor down to feather our nests," interrupted the thin man.

A Square Deal.

"What we farmers want is a square deal," went on the other. "This tariff of ours should be like a genial sun in the sky, givin' light and heat to the whole country without scorchin' anyone. I want a tariff which lets us all live. Don't I appear to be livin'? Look at my farm."

"I'm lookin'," said the other, "and what I see isn't hurtin' my eyes."

"What about your own?"

"Fair," replied the man on the keg, "fair; though the recent heavy crops have been hard on the land."

"And hard on your wallet, stretchin' it to the burstin' point."

"I can't complain," said the thin man, a trifle sadly.

"Complain," exclaimed Farmer Jones. "No, I reckon we can't. With the city people reachin' out their hands to pull our crops before they are ripe, and our American farmer friends lookin' enviously over the fence, we're in clover."

"Why are the farmers shoutin' for tariff reductions and practically asking for free trade?" asked the thin man. "Why are these big deputations of farmers going down to Ottawa scarin' the government and opposition too?"

Farmer Jones sat silent a moment before replying.

"There are various kinds of intoxication," he said finally. "But they all have one thing in common. They make their victims act foolish. The farmers of Canada at present are drunk with prosperity. They're makin' a rough house at Ottawa to show how strong they are. But when they begin to get the bills for broken glass and smashed furniture, when the mischief is done, it will be the cold gray dawn of the morning after for them."



